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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00

DRC-01 IO-14 /144 W
---------- 108938
R 211804Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0551
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SF, UK
SUBJECT: TUC MOVING VERY SLOWLY ON SOUTH AFRICA

REF: LONDON 1244

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE BRITISH TUC APPEARS TO BE MOVING EXTREMELY CAUTIOUSLY, EVEN SLOWLY, IN ITS EFFORTS TO ASSIST BLACK WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE TUC CONFERENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA ON MAY 2 RESTRICTED ITSELF MAINLY -- ACCORDING TO TUC OFFICIALS -- TO REPORTING ON THE VISIT OF ITS DELEGATION TO THAT COUNTRY IN OCT. 1973 (REFTEL). IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, A CHRISTIAN MULTI-DENOMINATIONA ORGANIZATION HAS JUST RELEASED A SURVEY WHICH INDICATES THAT WHILE SOME BRITISH FIRMS ARE BEGINNING TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR AFRICAN WORKERS, PROGRESS REMAINS VERY SLOW. END SUMMARY

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2. ACCORDING TO ALAN HARGREAVES, TUC INTERNATIONAL DEPAR-

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TMENT HEAD AND SHERATON SHAW, TUC STAFF OFFICIAL WHO FOLLOWS SOUTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS, THE TUC CONFERENCE -- A CLOSED AFFAIR ATTENDED BY ABOUT 100 REPRESENTATIVES OF AFFILIATED UNIONS -- WAS DEVOTED MAINLY TO DESCRIBING THE FINDINGS OF THE DELEGATION WHICH VISITED SOUTH AFRICA IN OCTOBER 1973 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF JACK JONES (REFTEL). THE DELEGATION'S CENTRAL PROPOSAL CALLED FOR THE RECOGNITION OF "GENUINELY INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS FOR BLACK AFRICAN WORKERS" AS WELL AS MEANS TO ASSIST THEM, INCLUDING THE RAISING OF A 100,000 POUND FUND FOR THAT PURPOSE. THE DELEGATION ALSO FAVORED CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO BRITISH INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA UNLESS BRITISH FIRMS DEMONSTRATE "THEY ARE ENCOURAGING AND RECOGNIZING GENUINELY INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS FOR BLACK WORKERS;" AND IT DECLARED "FIRMLY AGAINST THE EMIGRATION OF WHITE WORKERS TO SOUTH AFRICA."

3. DURING THE MAY 2 CONFERENCE, SHAW EXPLAINED, THERE WERE EXPRESSIONS OF OPPOSITION TO THE IDEA OF SUPPORTING SEPARATE BLACK UNIONS, PARTICULARLY FROM LEFT-WINGERS, SUCH AS ALLEN SAPPER, A MEMBER OF THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL AND OTHERS WHO CHARGED THAT SEPARATE BLACK UNIONS INDICATED TUC RECOGNITION OF APARTHEID. SOME SPEAKERS DECLARED THAT THE TUC SHOULD NOT HAVE EVEN SENT A DELEGATION. JACK JONES DEFENDED THE REPORT AND STRONGLY DENIED THAT THE TUC HAD CHANGED ITS POLICY OF OPPOSITION TO APARTHEID IN ANY WAY. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT WHILE THERE WERE A FEW BLACK UNIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA, THEIR POTENTIAL FOR EXPANSION WAS GOOD AND THEY SHOULD BE ASSISTED IN DOING SO.

4. IN THE EVENT, SHAW NOTED NO CONCRETE DECISIONS WERE MADE AT THE CONFERENCE, EITHER ON ESTABLISHING THE 100,000 POUND FUND OR ON SPECIFIC PROJECTS OF AID TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE MEETING REMAINED ESSENTIALLY "INFORMATIONAL," HE SAID. THE PROBLEM FOR

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THE FUTURE, HE ADDS, WAS NOT FINANCIAL BUT RATHER TO DETERMINE MEANINGFUL PROJECTS OF AID TO BLACK UNIONS.

5. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT CONCERNING SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK WORKERS (REPORTED IN THE FINANCIAL TIMES MAY 20), THE MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN FOR SOUTH AFRICA, SURVEYED 63 UK COMPANIES WHICH A COMMONS SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT EARLIER IN THE YEAR SAID WERE PAYING AT LEAST PART OF THEIR WORK FORCE AT RATES BELOW THE POVERTY LINE. IT NOTED SOME IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CONDITIONS OF WORKERS EMPLOYED BY SOME UK COMPANIES IN SOUTH AFRICA, BUT ADDED THAT PROGRESS IN RAISING WAGES ABOVE THE POVERTY LEVEL REMAINED VERY SLOW. HOWEVER, ONLY 43 COMPANIES REPLIED TO THE CHURCH GROUP'S QUESTIONNAIRE AND, ACCORDING TO THAT ORGANIZATION, MANY OF THE REPLIES WERE INCOMPLETE. (A COPY OF THIS REPORT WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS SOON AS AVAILABLE.)

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6. COMMENT: DESPITE THE FANFARE, PARTICULARLY IN THE PRESS, WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE VISIT OF THE TUC DELEGATION TO SOUTH AFRICA, THE FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY APPEARS TO BE ANTI-CLIMACTIC. THIS IS ILLUSTRATED BY THE VERY SLOW PACE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DELEGATION'S REPORT, THE UNCERTAINTY ABOUT CONCRETE PROGRAMS OF ACTION, AND THE FAILURE TO MOVE FORWARD ON A SPECIFIC FUNDING DRIVE. MOREOVER, THE DECISION TO HOLD A "CLOSED" CONFERENCE ON MAY 2, WHICH RESULTED IN ALMOST NO SIGNIFICANT PRESS COVERAGE, UNDERLINES THE SLOWNESS OF THE TUC PACE. THIS COULD CHANGE, OF COURSE, AND ACTION SPEEDED UP, BUT THE TUC, FOR THE MOMENT, DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN ANY HURRY.

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